SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE	SUPREME CO	OURT	OF THE	UNITED	STATES
				-	
JAMES K. KAHLI	ER,)	
	Petitione	r,)	
V.) No. 1	8-6135
KANSAS,)	
	Respondent	t.)	

Pages: 1 through 67

Place: Washington, D.C.

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IN	THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
JAME	S K. KAHLER,)
	Petitioner,)
	v.) No. 18-6135
KANS	AS,)
	Respondent.)
	Washington, D.	.C.
	Monday, October 7	7, 2019
	The above-entitled	d matter came on for
oral	argument before the Supre	eme Court of the
Unit	ed States at 10:07 a.m.	
APPE	ARANCES:	
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	on behalf of the Petitione	er.
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ELIZ	ABETH B. PRELOGAR, Assista	ant to the Solicitor
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	for the United States, as	amicus curiae,
	supporting the Respondent	

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Τ	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:07 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument first this term in Case Number 18-6135,
5	Kahler versus Kansas.
6	Ms. Schrup.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF SARAH SCHRUP
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MS. SCHRUP: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	For centuries, criminal culpability
12	has hinged on the capacity for moral judgment,
13	to discern and to choose between right and
14	wrong. The insane lack that capacity.
15	This understanding of insanity has
16	persisted since the 1500s and remains the rule
17	in 48 jurisdictions today. But Kansas scrubs
18	moral capacity from its criminal law and runs
19	afoul of the Fourteenth and Eighth Amendments.
20	Kansas rewrites history in two ways,
21	first by elevating the wild beast test, one that
22	was never used in this country and only rarely
23	in England, and secondly by conflating common
24	law intent, which required a vicious will and
25	was bound up in moral capacity with the what

- 1 it applies today, a morality-free modern mens
- 2 rea.
- 3 As such, Kansas uproots the deeply
- 4 rooted by eliminating any mechanism to assess
- 5 whether a defendant's capacity for moral
- 6 judgment was intact or was irretrievably
- 7 compromised by mental illness.
- Now, I'd like to turn briefly to due
- 9 process first and explain why the moral capacity
- 10 notion is and always has been fundamental in our
- 11 system.
- 12 The model penal code is an excellent
- 13 example. As criminal law evolved, the drafters
- moved to more precise mental states. When they
- did that, though, they retained the compelling
- 16 mechanism to show insanity. We could do that,
- 17 the drafters said, because we kept this, this
- 18 narrow remnant of common law criminality.
- In Clark, too, this Court recognized
- 20 both the presumption of sanity and that evidence
- 21 of insanity trumps mens rea. This demonstrates
- the continued need for a mechanism to rebut the
- 23 presumption of sanity, even when -- even though
- 24 a defendant harbors the requisite mental state.
- 25 And it was not only the mechanism that was

- 1 important in Clark; the substance was too. This
- 2 Court said Arizona could do that, it could
- 3 eliminate the first part of the M'Naghten test,
- 4 because it kept this, the right and wrong
- 5 principle that subsumes it.
- 6 So I'd like to now turn back to
- 7 history because it can be --
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, before you do
- 9 that, you're relying on due process. And
- 10 suppose a state decides it wants to rethink the
- insanity defense. It looks to other nations for
- 12 models. And one is what's known as a -- as a
- judgment of guilty but insane; that is, two
- 14 determinants are made. Did the defendant do the
- act with which he is charged? That's the first
- 16 question. And the second question is, what is
- the proper incapacitation? So guilty but insane
- 18 would lead to incapacitation in a mental
- 19 institution. Guilty and not insane would lead
- 20 to incarceration in prison.
- 21 Would such a scheme, if adopted by a
- state of the United States, violate due process?
- MS. SCHRUP: Yes, it would, Justice
- 24 Ginsburg. And I think it would because the
- 25 conviction itself carries collateral

- 1 consequences that -- and we have never, as a
- 2 country, treated the insane as culpable. And
- 3 that conviction would -- would impose collateral
- 4 consequences on the insane person who really
- 5 should be excused.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But I -- I
- 7 would have thought you would want collateral
- 8 consequences imposed, as I understood your
- 9 submission, because the idea is that someone
- 10 acquitted by reason of insanity would not go
- 11 free but would instead be committed to mental
- 12 care.
- MS. SCHRUP: Yes, that's right, Your
- 14 Honor. But --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, why
- 16 wouldn't that -- if that's the consequence of
- 17 the system Justice Ginsburg was talking about,
- 18 guilty but insane, I don't understand why that's
- 19 not exactly the sort of course you're looking
- 20 for.
- MS. SCHRUP: Well, I want to rewind a
- 22 little bit, Your Honor, because really what
- 23 we're talking about is the mechanism to be able
- 24 to show that you lack moral capacity. The back
- 25 end of it, as long as you have the mechanism to

- 1 show that you lack moral capacity, that you can
- 2 choose right from wrong or can't do that, then
- 3 the ultimate result is not all that
- 4 determinative. If guilty but insane means that
- 5 you -- if -- if you end up in exactly the same
- 6 place, then I suppose the label doesn't matter,
- 7 but what I'm nervous about, actually, is if you
- 8 have a guilty but insane, some of those statutes
- 9 in some jurisdictions are you're guilty, you go
- 10 and get treatment, and then once you are --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: My --
- MS. SCHRUP: -- well --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: My hypothetical is
- the question of where the person is incarcerated
- is determined second. It has no collateral
- 16 consequences. You're found to have committed
- the conduct charged, but because you are insane,
- 18 you go to a mental institution. So it would
- 19 take out any collateral consequences that would
- 20 label you on the criminal side. It's just you
- 21 have committed the deed that you were charged
- 22 with, but you were insane; therefore, you go to
- 23 mental institution. That, you think, would
- violate due process?
- MS. SCHRUP: Well, Your Honor, I --

- 1 you know, to the extent -- so I guess I would go
- 2 back to history on this. And what we know is
- 3 that these people were not even subject to
- 4 prosecution at all. Hawkins, in his Plea of the
- 5 Crown, said so. But as long as -- the
- 6 mechanism -- as long as the mechanism for the
- 7 defendant to present his lack of moral
- 8 capability at the back end, if the regime
- 9 protects him in that way.
- 10 But I also disagree, Your Honor, that
- 11 the conviction doesn't stigmatize or show that
- 12 he is guilty. I mean, if you're found guilty,
- 13 you have that conviction. I do think that the
- insane need mental treatment. They need
- 15 commitment.
- So I quess I'm not -- unless I'm
- 17 missing your point, I believe it's more about
- 18 the mechanism and not allowing a conviction of
- 19 an insane person.
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: You're talking about
- 21 lack of moral capacity. Would it be
- 22 unconstitutional if a state said that a person
- is sane if the person knows that the act is
- 24 illegal, even if the person thinks that the act
- 25 is moral?

1 MS. SCHRUP: So the right-and-wrong 2 principle, Your Honor, includes both knowledge of legal wrong and knowledge of moral wrong. 3 4 There's very little light between the two. 5 So --6 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, I don't know that that's the case. Someone can know that 7 8 something is illegal but feel very strongly that 9 it is moral. So what -- what's the answer to my 10 question? 11 MS. SCHRUP: Justice Alito, it's not 12 about a belief. It's about a capacity fueled by 13 mental illness. So if a person justifies or 14 believes that they are justified in acting in 15 that way, they are not covered by this baseline standard. 16 17 JUSTICE ALITO: If the --18 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: What's the answer 19 JUSTICE ALITO: -- person -- I -- if 20 21 the person has the capacity to know that what he 22 did was a violation of the criminal law, and 23 that's the defense that is provided by a state, 24 is that unconstitutional? 25 MS. SCHRUP: No. So long as it

- 1 encompasses -- it can't just be that you are --
- 2 that you -- you forget what criminal law is.
- 3 What Justice Breyer said in the dissent from the
- 4 denial of cert in Delling was that what legally
- 5 wrong means -- and it still falls within the
- 6 right-and-wrong principle, what legally wrong
- 7 means is that you are unable to comprehend the
- 8 actual nature of -- of the act such that you
- 9 believe, for example, that you're falling into a
- 10 defense.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, there are many,
- many people who believe, maybe not so much for
- 13 murder, but certainly for a lot of other
- offenses, that things that are violations of the
- 15 law are nevertheless moral.
- 16 And so if that were the general rule
- in criminal law, that you cannot be convicted if
- 18 you -- if you know that -- if you believe that
- 19 what you've done is moral, that would
- 20 revolutionize criminal law. And the only
- 21 element that you are adding to that is that this
- is caused by a mental disorder.
- 23 So it becomes important to understand
- 24 what you mean by mental disorder. And what do
- you mean by a mental disorder? Do you mean

- 1 everything that is listed as a mental disorder
- 2 in the latest edition of the DSM?
- MS. SCHRUP: Your Honor, it's not
- 4 about the diagnosis. And you asked what mental
- 5 capacity means and -- and what mental illness
- 6 means. I can put it this way: It is as if a
- 7 person -- it's -- again, it's not about a
- 8 belief. It's not about justifying. It's about
- 9 you actually can't tap in to the part of your
- 10 brain that allows you to choose right versus
- 11 wrong.
- 12 And juries have, in 48 jurisdictions,
- been able to make this distinction regardless of
- 14 what the diagnosis is.
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what is the
- answer to my question? Is it sufficient if the
- 17 person has something that is considered to be a
- 18 mental disorder in the DSM? And it has been
- 19 calculated that one in five people in the United
- 20 States has some mental disorder. So we're
- 21 talking about 60 plus -- 60 million plus people.
- 22 All of them could go to the jury on the question
- of whether they had the capacity to know that
- 24 what they were doing when they committed the
- 25 crime was morally wrong.

```
1
               MS. SCHRUP: Justice Alito, they
 2
      should be given the opportunity to at least try.
      This shouldn't be legislatively cut off at the
 3
 4
             There are many mechanisms in place in
 5
      our trial system, many hoops that they would
 6
     have to jump through.
 7
                But if they have a mental disease
 8
     that's diagnosed, then they should at least be
9
      able to get in the door and get evaluated and
10
      then proceed --
11
               JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. --
12
               MS. SCHRUP: -- and --
13
               JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Schrup --
14
               MS. SCHRUP: Yes?
                JUSTICE KAGAN: Can I ask you about a
15
16
     premise of your argument? And it's that if we
17
      look to history, and if history supports what
18
     you say, then we're obligated to go with it now.
19
               And I -- I just want to ask how and
20
     why that's so, because there are many ways in
21
      which understandings of criminal culpability
22
      change over the years. And -- and -- and how do
23
     we figure out which are the ones that the
24
     Constitution requires stay the same now as they
25
     were back in the common law or back at the
```

- 1 founding or back in 1868, depending on which
- 2 date you're using, and -- and -- and which ones
- 3 can change? What -- what -- what do we do?
- We're not stuck with all of history,
- 5 are we? So if we're -- if we're not stuck with
- 6 all of history, why are we obligated to keep
- 7 this part of it?
- MS. SCHRUP: Well, Your Honor, because
- 9 that's the test that this Court has set out for
- 10 due process. And you could go back as far as
- 11 you want, but by the 1500s, we know that this
- 12 was an intact principle.
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, the -- I mean,
- 14 the test that was set out by this Court for due
- process, I mean, I could give you some ways in
- 16 which the criminal law of olden times seems
- 17 remarkably archaic to us now, marital rape
- 18 exception, maybe sodomy laws. I'm sure that
- 19 there are others that I could list.
- You know, what does due process
- 21 require we hang onto notwithstanding changing
- 22 times? And -- and I guess what is criminal --
- 23 not -- what -- what is -- what does the Due
- 24 Process Clause require that we hang onto,
- 25 notwithstanding the judgments of some states

1 that the time for this has come and gone? 2 MS. SCHRUP: Well, we are -- we actually have sort of a perfect complements, 3 Justice Kagan, because we have not only the 4 5 history that goes back maybe a thousand years, 6 and certainly since the mid 1500s, but we also have the modern practice, a fundamental -- a 7 8 rule of fundamental fairness currently in operation in 48 of 53 U.S. jurisdictions. 9 10 So it's not just the history. It's 11 the fact that we look and everyone has retained 12 it or nearly everyone has retained it. 13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: With respect to 14 history, can we take into account the reality, 15 in the old days at common law, the result of the 16 insanity defense would be you were sent to 17 bedlam, where the conditions were often far 18 worse than in prison? So someone might decide, 19 no, I'm not going to plead insanity, because 20 then I'll end up with an incarceration worse 21 than prison. 22 Do we take that into account in 23 deciding the function of the insanity defense? 24 MS. SCHRUP: I don't think you need to 25 take it into account. I think what the

- 1 fundamental principle is, is that the good and
- 2 evil principle or the right and wrong principle
- 3 as applied to the insane, it's -- it's the
- 4 application to the insane that has -- is deeply
- 5 rooted in our country.
- And where those people -- I mean, in
- 7 today's time, those people wouldn't be sent
- 8 there, right? We know after Foucha that this --
- 9 those people are sent to an institution.
- So, no, I don't think it's -- it's how
- 11 they were historically -- where they ended up.
- 12 They ended up in a lot of places, Justice
- 13 Ginsburg. Sometimes they ended up there.
- 14 Sometimes they were released to their families.
- 15 So --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The things
- 17 that I -- I think is underlying a lot of the
- debate is the expansive notion of what counts as
- 19 evidence. In -- in -- in your brief, you say
- 20 the defendant in this case was -- this is
- 21 evidence to support his insanity claim, was
- described by some as a tightwad who would, for
- example, borrow rather than purchase tools.
- 24 And -- and in the same page, again,
- 25 this is evidence that you selected in the -- to

- 1 put in your brief of his mental disorder, that
- 2 he thrived on self-importance, community
- 3 prestige, and being perceived as having an ideal
- 4 or perfect marriage.
- Now, maybe that's not the best way to
- 6 order your life, but if that's what you mean by
- 7 insanity, you can understand why that might
- 8 cause some reservations.
- 9 MS. SCHRUP: Your Honor, Mr. -- Mr.
- 10 Chief Justice, let me just tell you why those
- 11 facts are in there and why they're not -- why
- they're there and that will shed light on it.
- 13 What we know is that Mr. Kahler had a
- 14 major depressive disorder. He had a qualifying
- 15 mental illness. Those facts are in there to
- show that there was an entire other category of
- 17 evidence that, in combination with that major
- depressive disorder, could have been 99 been
- 19 developed.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But that he --
- MS. SCHRUP: But it doesn't --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- borrows
- 23 tools instead of purchasing them? That sounds
- 24 like the reasonable option.
- 25 (Laughter.)

1 MS. SCHRUP: Well, you can't -- Mr. 2 Chief Justice, you can't take that one fact out 3 of context. But the most important thing is, is that juries are able to take the collection of 4 5 evidence and -- that is presented to them, and decide, they decide whether the person is 6 7 insane, whether they have the capacity for moral 8 judgment or not. 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What -- what would 10 be put before the jury, that is, what now, what evidence in this record would you point to to 11 12 show that Kahler was unable to tell right from wrong? What evidence is there that he was 13 14 unable to make that distinction? 15 MS. SCHRUP: On the current record -which, of course, was not developed with a right 16 17 and wrong principle -- I would point you to the 18 Joint Appendix at 87 where his expert said that 19 he -- he couldn't rule out short-term 20 disassociation. If you are off-line in that 21 way, he couldn't appreciate right versus wrong. 22 But, again, I'd like to point out that he was --23 he was not even given the opportunity to put 24 forth that and to develop other evidence that 25 would have shown more forcefully that he didn't.

1	Alla that's
2	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, he had the
3	MS. SCHRUP: the same for every
4	defendant.
5	JUSTICE ALITO: He had the opportunity
6	and every incentive to do that at the penalty
7	phase. At the penalty phase, he was able to
8	to argue I shouldn't get a death sentence
9	because I didn't know that what I was doing was
10	morally wrong.
11	And you'd think that, if the jury
12	believed that, they wouldn't have imposed the
13	death penalty.
14	But they did. And you have to keep in
15	mind what he did. And this is an intelligent
16	man, and he sneaked up on the house, where his
17	wife and her mother and his children were
18	staying. He killed his ex-wife. He killed his
19	ex her mother. He executed his two teenage
20	daughters. One of them is heard on the tape
21	crying. He, nevertheless, shot her to death.
22	He spared the son, because he didn't think the
23	son was siding with the mother. And then he ran
24	away and turned himself in the next day.
25	Now, this is the stuff from which

- 1 you're going to make a defense he didn't know
- 2 that what he was doing was morally wrong, much
- 3 less he didn't know what he was doing was
- 4 legally wrong?
- 5 MS. SCHRUP: Justice Alito, I'll
- 6 answer the first part. Sentencing is not a
- 7 substitute because we know from the briefs that
- 8 jurors make up their mind at the guilt phase.
- 9 And, In fact, a dissenting Justice in the
- 10 opinion below said we should not let what
- 11 happens at guilt indicate what happens at
- 12 sentencing.
- 13 And because that he lacked that, the
- jury lacked that lens to consider the moral
- 15 capacity principle, you can't draw any -- it
- 16 would be speculative to say what the capital
- 17 jury would have decided.
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: But is that realistic?
- 19 I'm on a jury and I say: Well, now I -- I've
- 20 convicted this guy. I found him guilty. Having
- 21 done that, even though I think that he didn't
- 22 know that what he was doing was morally wrong,
- 23 I'm going to vote to impose the death penalty.
- 24 Is that realistic?
- 25 MS. SCHRUP: It is realistic because

- 1 we know from the briefs that they -- that jurors
- 2 are swayed by what they decide at the guilt
- 3 phase. And if they have lacked the mechanism
- 4 and the opportunity to look through the lens of
- 5 capacity for moral judgment, then -- then we
- 6 can't draw any conclusions about that.
- 7 Now, the facts are hard in every case
- 8 and they are hard in this case. But what we're
- 9 talking about is an opportunity, a mechanism for
- 10 all defendants, to be able to get into the
- 11 threshold and let a jury decide --
- 12 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You've referred
- 13 several times to the jury. And one of the
- 14 debates that has occurred over the last several
- decades is the capacity of juries to be able to
- 16 parse these fine concepts. And one of the
- things that leading scholars have said is that
- 18 this may be beyond the capacity of jurors to do
- in a principled way.
- 20 So why can't a state say, as Justice
- 21 Alito points out, we're going to take this away
- 22 from the jury as a separate defense, put it into
- 23 mens rea, and then, as Justice Ginsburg points
- 24 out, have it considered at sentencing? Why is
- 25 that an unreasonable policy judgment, so

- 1 unreasonable as to violate due process?
- MS. SCHRUP: Well, two points, Justice
- 3 Kavanaugh. First of all, the critiques or the
- 4 debates were not about abolition. They were not
- 5 about scrapping the defense entirely. Those
- 6 should be handled through instructional or --
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well --
- 8 MS. SCHRUP: -- evidentiary
- 9 mechanisms.
- 10 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Sorry to
- interrupt, but I think one of the debates was,
- in fact, about putting it into a mens rea
- defense as Kansas has done, in part because the
- 14 concept as a separate defense was too confusing
- 15 for jurors. And Professor Goldstein pointed
- 16 that out in his book and that has been part of
- 17 the debate.
- 18 So they haven't necessarily abolished
- 19 the insanity defense. I think that's a bit of a
- 20 misnomer. They have funneled it into mens rea
- 21 and then said that it can be considered at
- 22 sentencing as well.
- MS. SCHRUP: Justice Kavanaugh, they
- 24 have abolished. I mean, they -- they've
- 25 acknowledged they've abolished. And what is

- 1 present in the mens rea approach is nothing more
- than what Winship requires. And we know that it
- 3 is not sufficient because it doesn't allow -- it
- 4 doesn't allow a jury or -- or the defendant to
- 5 raise his capacity for moral judgment, which, if
- 6 you go back through history, was an important
- 7 component --
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. --
- 9 MS. SCHRUP: -- of criminal
- 10 culpability.
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Schrup, do you
- 12 have any information about how this works in the
- 13 46 states that have the rule that you prefer?
- 14 In other words, how often do people raise
- 15 insanity defenses? How often do juries actually
- 16 find insanity?
- 17 If this were in one of the other 46
- 18 states, how would it operate? But -- or -- or
- 19 not if this case was. I mean, honestly, you
- 20 can't say this, but I can. This -- in none of
- 21 these 46 states, I'm -- I'm -- I'm guessing,
- 22 would your client be found insane. But what
- 23 happens in these 46 states? How often are
- 24 people found insane?
- MS. SCHRUP: So, Justice Kagan, it's

- 1 not in the record. I have done some research.
- 2 I could let you know what I found out if you'd
- 3 like me to, but it's not contained in the
- 4 record. But I do know that it is raised in the
- 5 right-and-wrong states and that there are
- 6 acquittals every year.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: And, counsel, can I
- 8 just -- one other question about the extent of
- 9 how far this goes. Obviously, this is a capital
- 10 case, but how -- how far down the road would you
- 11 say this defense must be extended as a matter of
- due process? To all homicides? To all
- 13 felonies? Where do you think the line would be
- 14 drawn?
- MS. SCHRUP: I don't think that you
- draw the line, Justice Gorsuch, at punishment.
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So an insanity
- defense is required with respect to any criminal
- 19 complaint, even a regulatory strict liability
- 20 misdemeanor?
- MS. SCHRUP: This Court has never --
- 22 well, so it's our position -- we're making a
- facial challenge, so it's our position it should
- 24 be applied everywhere.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.

1 MS. SCHRUP: But this Court has never 2 definitively ruled on the extent of strict liability crimes. I think it could carve that 3 out. But I think what's important are two 4 5 things, Justice Gorsuch: First of all, this is 6 a rarely used defense. It's invoked in less than one percent of the cases and successful in 7 8 only a quarter of that. We're not talking about 9 a huge number of people. 10 But for the people that it really matters, there is no mechanism in these states 11 12 to protect them, to let them be excused or to let the -- a jury consider their actual 13 14 culpability when they can't tap into their 15 brains in the way other people's -- people can. And I think jurors are able to decide that. 16 17 They decide the term "reasonableness" all the 18 time. 19 JUSTICE ALITO: If a state adopted the 20 irresistible impulse defense, would that be 21 unconstitutional? 22 MS. SCHRUP: This Court in Leland said 23 that it is not a constitutional floor. So, no. 24 JUSTICE ALITO: No, not whether it's 25 required, but would that be unconstitutional

- 1 because it does not ask whether the person knew
- 2 right from wrong?
- 3 MS. SCHRUP: I think, yes, it would --
- 4 it would also have to include the
- 5 right-and-wrong principle.
- 6 I'd like to turn briefly to the Eighth
- 7 Amendment. The original public meaning of that
- 8 term was that it would be cruel and unusual to
- 9 punish the insane. In 1868, with the
- 10 Reconstruction, amendments were adopted. Every
- 11 single jurisdiction had an insanity defense.
- 12 And even if you rewind back to 1791, it would
- 13 have been cruel and unusual to punish the
- 14 insane. They were either handled outside of the
- 15 legal process or they were allowed to come in
- 16 and plead and prove insanity.
- Because the Eighth Amendment was --
- 18 was intended as a check on sovereign power,
- 19 states are simply not free to legislatively
- 20 redefine culpability in a way that is
- 21 inconsistent with history and long-standing
- 22 practice.
- 23 But that is what Kansas has done here.
- 24 It is an outlier. It prevents people from -- it
- 25 -- well, by taking away the mechanism, they

- 1 ensure that insane people will be punished in
- 2 their borders.
- 3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The Kansas Supreme
- 4 Court didn't reach that question, so you are
- 5 asking to -- us to decide it as a matter of
- 6 first impression.
- 7 MS. SCHRUP: No, Justice Ginsburg.
- 8 And this -- you know, was vetted at the cert
- 9 stage, and I would point this Court to the
- 10 addendum to -- at our cert reply at page 18 and
- 11 19, because there it's clear that this notion of
- 12 applying wrongfulness to the insanity defense
- 13 came up at oral argument, was argued, and in
- 14 that post-argument memo, counsel said we believe
- 15 that this issue is presented. We're going to --
- 16 if you want supplemental briefing, we'll provide
- it, but we believe it is an issue that is
- 18 implicit in this Court's ruling.
- 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: What do you do
- 20 with the statement of Justice Marshall for a
- 21 plurality in Powell versus Texas? "Nothing
- 22 could be less fruitful than for this Court to be
- 23 impelled into defining some sort of insanity
- 24 defense -- or insanity test in constitutional
- 25 terms." I think pointing out the difficulty of

- 1 us, through the Due Process Clause, wading into
- 2 this policy debate and figuring out what the
- 3 line is.
- 4 MS. SCHRUP: Justice Kavanaugh, that
- 5 -- and Powell was not an abolition case, first
- of all. But, secondly, what Justice Powell said
- 7 there was a reflection of the facts of that
- 8 case. That case had to grapple with Leland, and
- 9 the only mechanism or the only test that would
- 10 have applied in Powell is an irresistible or
- 11 compulsion-based test.
- 12 So our standard, the right-and-wrong
- 13 standard, is below that. And it's not a --
- 14 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But Leland in turn
- 15 said -- noted the wide disagreement among
- 16 different tests and said choice of a test
- 17 involves not only scientific knowledge but
- 18 questions of basic policy. The whole problem
- 19 has evoked wide disagreement among those who
- 20 have studied it, which is true as to this -- as
- 21 to the Kansas approach as well. There's wide
- 22 disagreement, but some have advocated for that
- as well.
- MS. SCHRUP: Well, Leland also
- 25 recognized the right-and-wrong principle was the

- 1 majority test in the majority of jurisdictions.
- 2 And that holds true today because 48
- 3 jurisdictions have retained this baseline
- 4 principle. And we're not --
- 5 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Are -- are all 48
- 6 constitutional?
- 7 MS. SCHRUP: If they have the
- 8 right-and-wrong principle, they are. Yes.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Is that a yes?
- MS. SCHRUP: Yes, I'm sorry.
- 11 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: All 48 are
- 12 constitutional?
- MS. SCHRUP: Yes.
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Justice Marshall's --
- Justice Marshall's statement in Powell was not
- 16 limited in the way that you suggest. It was
- 17 categorical. And he was joined by Chief Justice
- 18 Warren, Justice Black, and Justice Harlan in
- 19 saying that. So they were all wrong at that
- 20 time?
- MS. SCHRUP: Mr. Chief Justice?
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Briefly.
- MS. SCHRUP: Okay. Justice Alito,
- it's not that they were wrong; it's just they
- 25 were talking about a different scenario, a

- 1 non-abolition case dealing with a test that is
- 2 north of our standard. Thank you.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 4 counsel.
- 5 Mr. Crouse.
- 6 ORAL ARGUMENT OF TOBY CROUSE
- 7 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- 8 MR. CROUSE: Mr. Chief Justice, and
- 9 may it please the Court:
- 10 Petitioner asked this Court to define
- 11 a rule of insanity and to require the states to
- 12 implement that rule in its criminal justice
- 13 proceedings. But, as this Court indicated in
- 14 Powell, nearly 50 years ago, nothing would be
- 15 less fruitful than for this Court to select a
- 16 rigid rule of constitutional law of insanity.
- 17 And that admonition rings as true today as it
- 18 did 50 years ago.
- 19 The first thing I'd like to talk about
- is that it's not deeply rooted. The right
- 21 versus wrong test is a relatively recent
- 22 vintage. The historical basis for it started
- 23 somewhere around the 1800s; and, therefore, it's
- 24 not deeply rooted.
- In addition, the states have had

- 1 historical and traditional discretion to both
- 2 define the elements of the criminal law, the
- 3 defenses that are available in those criminal
- 4 justice proceedings, and the substantive rules
- 5 at which those defenses and elements are met.
- 6 And consistent with that discretion,
- 7 the State of Kansas has a holistic approach to
- 8 the mental illness problem starting at the time
- 9 the criminal justice proceeding is initiated,
- 10 throughout the guilt phase, as well as in the
- 11 punishment phase, and continuing on even with
- 12 regard to the sentence as it's carried out,
- whether being in a prison or in a mental
- 14 hospital.
- These factors confirm that Petitioner
- has not carried the heavy burden to identify a
- 17 single rule that is clearly established and
- 18 required by the fundamental elements of due
- 19 process. And for that reason, we believe that
- 20 the state supreme court judgment in Kansas
- 21 should be affirmed.
- 22 And so unless there are additional
- 23 questions this Court would have, I'd -- I'd like
- 24 to first turn to the answer of Justice Alito's
- 25 question, and the answer is the right-and-wrong

- 1 test has multiple components. There is no
- 2 consistent element or definition of how that's
- 3 applied in any of the 46 jurisdictions. As our
- 4 brief points out, there are a host of different
- 5 factions and different ways in which those
- 6 elements would be met, and we think that, in and
- 7 of itself, undermines the constitutional floor
- 8 that Petitioner seeks --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Crouse --
- 10 MR. CROUSE: -- to have US --
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I -- I understand
- what you're saying, but I have a problem
- 13 because, as I understand the mens rea test, it
- 14 takes away excusing a person who, from the 15 --
- 15 1400s, would have been considered a lunatic, a
- 16 person who hears voices and the voices tell him
- or her what to do, and they have no volition to
- 18 fight back.
- 19 They -- many of them know they're
- 20 killing somebody. So intent under your mens rea
- 21 test is met. They absolutely know they're
- 22 killing someone; they just have no ability to
- 23 say no. They -- they don't -- they can't
- 24 because of their either mental illness --
- 25 lunacy, all of the wild beast things, all of --

- 1 yes, they have two components, some volition and
- 2 some not, but for centuries, that concept of no
- 3 volition, the true lunatic, would get off.
- 4 Your test doesn't do that.
- 5 MR. CROUSE: Well, it -- it does. And
- 6 so our test is -- is relatively consistent with
- 7 the cognitive capacity test. There's a
- 8 volitional, there's a moral test, and then
- 9 there's the product test. And so we -- we would
- 10 view our test as consistent with the cognitive
- 11 test.
- 12 And if the individual can't formulate
- 13 the in -- criminal intent in Kansas, that --
- 14 that is a sufficient defense. And that has been
- 15 --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's not how
- 17 I read your charge. And when I read the charge
- 18 here, it doesn't talk -- you're talking the very
- 19 language that your adversary is suggesting you
- 20 should adopt.
- MR. CROUSE: Yeah.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But it's not part
- of the mens rea test. The strict mens rea test
- 24 now is do you intend to -- do you know what
- 25 you're doing?

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1
               MR. CROUSE: Do you have criminal
 2
      intent, that's right. I -- I --
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, no --
 3
                            What I --
 4
               MR. CROUSE:
 5
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- there's not --
     yes, you're -- you're adding a volition. But
 6
     what I'm saying is your -- this test standing
7
 8
     alone doesn't do that.
9
               MR. CROUSE: So, as I -- I understand
10
     Petitioner's test, is they want to ask the
     question of whether or not the individual knows
11
12
      that it's either legally or morally right versus
13
     wrong. What Kansas does is, if you have
14
      criminal intent, you are responsible.
15
               But --
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, I think
16
17
      there --
               MR. CROUSE: -- after conviction then
18
19
     you have the opportunity to assert a right
20
      versus wrong test.
21
                JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, but that's
22
      the point, which is that issue, which is after
23
      conviction. What she's been arguing is that
24
      since the beginning of time, both under English
25
      law and at the time of the founding, all the
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- 1 states then -- and, frankly, until I think the
- 2 1970s -- all 50 states didn't make it a subject
- 3 of sentencing.
- 4 They made it a reason for why you
- 5 should be excused from your conduct -- for your
- 6 conduct.
- 7 You're saying the same thing with
- 8 something like duress: I intend to kill
- 9 someone, but it's because somebody is holding a
- 10 gun to my head. All 50 states would let you
- off. But you're now saying it's okay to
- 12 stigmatize you with a criminal conviction even
- though, in fact, you may be insane.
- MR. CROUSE: I'm saying what the state
- of Kansas has done is it has defined its mental
- 16 illness defense consistent with what the
- 17 historical teachings are, dating back to
- 18 Blackstone, going all the way up to the 1910, I
- 19 believe it was Professor -- Dean Orville Morris
- indicated that up until the 19th Century, that
- 21 being M'Naghten, criminal intent was what
- 22 handled everything with regard to criminal
- 23 insanity.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: So, General Crouse,
- 25 could you assume for a moment that I disagree

- 1 with you on the reading of the historical
- 2 record? And just let's say that the historical
- 3 record actually -- that there's much more
- 4 evidence than you are suggesting that a
- 5 defendant had to have a guilty mind, meaning an
- 6 understanding that what he was doing was
- 7 immoral, as well as the inability to form
- 8 specific criminal intent.
- 9 And if -- if that's the case, if you
- 10 look at the -- all the cases and say, you know,
- 11 case after case after case what they're talking
- 12 about is something more than criminal intent,
- what they're talking about is some kind of moral
- understanding, if that's the case what's your
- 15 best argument that you should win?
- 16 MR. CROUSE: So I think I have three.
- 17 The first one is the existence of strict
- 18 liability. The second would be the existence of
- 19 corporate liability. And, third, I think
- there's just the general understanding that
- 21 criminal intent has always been separated from
- 22 moral and -- moral capacity.
- 23 And even with regard to -- I think the
- 24 hypothetical you have suggested, I think we
- 25 would have to know whether or not the right

- 1 versus wrong test is being defined in a legal
- 2 sense or a moral sense.
- 3 And even if so, the states that have
- 4 adopted the right versus wrong test have
- 5 variations within them. Some, for example, like
- 6 the federal government, to my understanding,
- 7 would require a severe mental illness.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: You know, I guess I --
- 9 I understand that there are some variations in
- 10 the historical record and even in states now,
- 11 but -- but there are some number of states, a
- great number, 46 states, 48 states, whatever it
- is, that go further than you do in terms of
- saying something more is required than the mere
- 15 capacity to -- to formulate criminal intent, and
- 16 that that something more in large measure is
- some ability to -- to -- to make moral judgments
- and to distinguish between right and wrong.
- 19 And, again, let's just assume that --
- 20 that that's what the historical record said. I
- 21 know you don't agree with that. But let's
- 22 assume that that's what the historical record
- 23 indicated. Could you still win and why?
- MR. CROUSE: I -- I could because of
- 25 the nature of this Court's inquiry. This Court

- 1 has to -- I'm sorry, Petitioner has to satisfy a
- 2 high burden to identify a particular rule that
- 3 the absence of which Kansas law would constitute
- 4 a violation of a deeply-rooted rule. And that
- 5 simply doesn't exist based upon the very
- 6 generalities that we've talked about today. So
- 7 --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But it seems
- 9 that by its nature, if the principle is, as
- 10 Justice Kagan suggests, hypothetically, if it's
- 11 historically established that you cannot punish
- 12 people who don't know the difference between
- 13 right and wrong, that certainly sounds like
- something that is rooted in the conscience and
- 15 would be ranked as fundamental.
- MR. CROUSE: Well, I -- I think what
- 17 the -- what the -- and I don't mean to fight the
- 18 hypothetical here -- but my understanding of the
- 19 history is that what has been dealt with
- 20 throughout our time is how to resolve and handle
- 21 mental illness within the criminal capability
- 22 system.
- 23 And what this Court's decision,
- 24 Arizona versus Clark said, is that there is no
- 25 fundamental --

1 JUSTICE BREYER: You're not going to get it exactly. I mean, it is a -- it is a 2 nightmare trying to figure out exact standards. 3 4 I agree with that. But my question, which I 5 just hope you would clarify, because it's -- I'm 6 stumbling on it, imagine two defendants. Both defendants, 1 and 2, are 7 8 certified by whatever board of psychiatrists you 9 want as totally insane. All right? The first 10 defendant shoots and kills Smith. The second 11 defendant shoots and kills Jones. 12 The first defendant thinks that Smith 13 is a dog. The second defendant knows it's a 14 person but thinks the dog told him to do it. 15 Okay? What's the difference? MR. CROUSE: So I think that's -- the 16 difference is criminal intent in the first 17 18 situation because, as I understand the 19 hypothetical, the individual intends to commit a 20 crime against a human being. 21 JUSTICE BREYER: I -- I -- I know 22 these are words, you see, I want it looking for 23 something in terms of criminal law or legal 24 purpose or human purpose or whatever that would

treat the two -- why treat them differently?

- One answer you've given, you said it's
- 2 so hard to figure out. I agree it's hard to get
- a definition. That's going to be true in both
- 4 cases.
- 5 You say criminal, corporate criminal
- 6 liability, and regulatory offenses. I agree
- 7 with you, you'd have to carve out exceptions and
- 8 that is not easy to do. Okay? I've got those
- 9 points.
- 10 But I'm looking for something
- 11 different between the two defendants. The dog,
- there he is, the dog, he told me to do it. They
- 13 are both crazy.
- And why does Kansas say one is guilty,
- 15 the other is not guilty?
- 16 MR. CROUSE: So I -- I think that this
- 17 Court's cases have historically allowed
- 18 legislative --
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: I don't care --
- 20 MR. CROUSE: -- bodies --
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: -- what the cases say
- 22 at this moment. I've read cases, my law clerk
- has found 40 instances, going back to Bracton,
- 24 you know, where it seems to be against you, but
- 25 I'm not interested in that.

1 I'm interested in a practical, 2 pragmatic purpose, in why the law should treat those two cases differently. Same question, 3 4 I've just now repeated it three times, and I am 5 listening for your answer. 6 MR. CROUSE: So -- and I apologize for not getting to the answer of your question. 7 Ι 8 think that the problem is that states have 9 grappled with this and they've made different 10 moral judgments as to who is morally responsible 11 or not. And this Court's cases allow the state 12 legislatures or federal Congress to determine 13 whether that person should be or should not be 14 held responsible. What Kansas does is it identifies 15 those who intend to commit a crime, punishes 16 17 those. 18 JUSTICE BREYER: You're -- you're 19 telling me --20 MR. CROUSE: Our -- our --21 JUSTICE BREYER: -- that states -- and 22 you're right, particularly Kansas, do, in fact, 23 treat he's a dog, the dog told me to do it, 24 differently. But my question was why? 25 MR. CROUSE: Well, I think it's a

- 1 spectrum as to what the states believe is
- 2 appropriate.
- In Delaware, for example, my
- 4 understanding is that individual would not be
- 5 convicted, whereas in Illinois that person could
- 6 be convicted because they know that shooting a
- 7 human being is legally wrong.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Do you think, General
- 9 Crouse, that you could also eliminate
- 10 consideration of the moral understanding at
- 11 sentencing, in other words, take the Justice
- 12 Breyer example and the dog told me to do it,
- would it be unconstitutional if your state did
- 14 not have a procedure for considering that at
- 15 sentencing?
- MR. CROUSE: So obviously a different
- 17 question and I think it also engenders a
- 18 different test. I think that -- that, if you're
- 19 considering what is available at the sentencing,
- 20 for whether it violates the constitution, would
- 21 implicate the Eighth Amendment.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, let's put the
- 23 Eighth Amendment to the side. Let's say that
- 24 this isn't a capital case. All right? Does a
- 25 state just have to have a way to consider at

1 sentencing somebody's complete lack of 2 understanding of the morality of his actions? MR. CROUSE: I don't believe this 3 Court's cases would indicate that the states 4 5 have to consider the morality at sentencing or 6 any particular time. JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But the --7 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: How about -- how 9 about the mens rea aspect of that? I -- I -- I 10 just want to follow up on Justice Breyer's question as well, and Justice Kagan. 11 12 would you -- would you accept that at least that is required as a matter of due process, that 13 14 some inquiry into mens rea is required in these 15 cases? And if so, why? And if not, why? MR. CROUSE: Well, yes, I would accept 16 17 that carving out strict liability in the corporate liability context. 18 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Why? And how do you reconcile that with our strict liability cases? 20 21 MR. CROUSE: Well, I -- I think what 22 this Court has done is historically quarded mens 23 rea because that's what separates innocent conduct from criminal conduct. And that's what 24

Kansas has done here.

1	JUSTICE GORSUCH: So you you accept
2	that there is a constitutional minimum floor
3	below which the state states cannot proceed
4	with respect to mental capacity and insanity;
5	you just suggest that you've met that standard.
6	MR. CROUSE: I
7	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Is that the the
8	nub of the argument, then?
9	MR. CROUSE: I think I would finely
LO	parse that a little bit. I would I admit
L1	that there is a mens rea requirement with regard
L2	to how one would define insanity. I don't
L3	believe that this Court has identified a floor
L4	and suggested that there are variations of ways
L5	to handle
L6	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm not sure I
L7	understand. You accept that states can define
L8	strict liability crimes. I don't know if you've
L9	answered Justice Gorsuch's question
20	JUSTICE GORSUCH: No.
21	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: which is could
22	could you do away with the mens rea defense?
23	Could you simply say we in Kansas believe if you
24	kill someone, regardless of the reasons, if
25	you've done the act, you've committed murder?

- 1 Period, end of story. No mens rea defense, no
- 2 nothing.
- 3 MR. CROUSE: Again, I think that is a
- 4 much more difficult situation, and I -- I -- I
- 5 think that would present a -- a lot of
- 6 additional problems for the State of Kansas
- 7 because of this Court's requirement of having a
- 8 mens rea baseline.
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: Could you --
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, has that --
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- get rid of other
- 12 defenses --
- JUSTICE ALITO: -- ever been --
- 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- General Crouse?
- 15 Could you get rid of other defenses? You know,
- 16 duress. Could you get rid of the duress
- 17 defense?
- 18 MR. CROUSE: Yeah, so -- so I -- I
- 19 think the same historical analysis that we have
- 20 undergone with regard to the insanity test is
- 21 something that we would have to look at. I
- 22 haven't done the --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, on the --
- 24 MR. CROUSE: -- individual research on
- 25 duress --

Τ	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: the history				
2	JUSTICE ALITO: You seem very reticent				
3	about answering these questions. Has there ever				
4	been can you cite any any state or any				
5	legal system, I'll even just limit it to				
6	English-speaking countries, that have ever said				
7	that killing another person is a strict				
8	liability offense?				
9	MR. CROUSE: No. And and Kansas				
10	certainly doesn't do that.				
11	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: On the history				
12	that Justice Kagan was asking about, I think				
13	your primary answer was that there's been no				
14	particular test that is historically rooted.				
15	But isn't there a baseline that is historically				
16	rooted, above which there have been a variety of				
17	tests that have been accepted by the states				
18	until, as Justice Sotomayor said, until the end				
19	of the 20th century?				
20	MR. CROUSE: I I think I would				
21	agree that the states have organized				
22	societies have consistently struggled with how				
23	to define and handle mental illness, but I don't				
24	believe that there has been a baseline that has				
25	been established beneath which the states could				

- 1 go.
- 2 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, since the
- 3 early 1800s, at least, to the late 20th century
- 4 in the United States, didn't every state allow
- 5 some form of a separate insanity defense at the
- 6 guilt phase?
- 7 MR. CROUSE: My understanding is that
- 8 the treatment of insanity has varied within
- 9 particular parameters. For example, some states
- 10 would require an affirmative defense. Kansas,
- 11 for example, didn't have a separate defense.
- 12 It --
- 13 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But all
- 14 separate -- let me just focus on my question.
- 15 All -- all the states had something separate
- 16 from the mens rea approach at the guilt phase
- 17 through the end of the 20th century; isn't that
- 18 correct as a matter of historical practice? You
- 19 can still win the case, as Justice Kagan noted,
- 20 but just to make sure we're on the same page.
- 21 MR. CROUSE: Yeah, and I'm not trying
- 22 to -- to skip the answer, because I think Kansas
- 23 actually included it as part of the guilt phase.
- It didn't have a separate insanity defense.
- So, for example, it came in with a

- 1 different definition.
- JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, you're saying
- 3 all states had a separate insanity defense in
- 4 1791?
- 5 MR. CROUSE: I -- I don't believe
- 6 I was saying that --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: No.
- 8 MR. CROUSE: -- they have separate
- 9 defenses. I think they handled it differently.
- 10 Some of them defined it as an affirmative
- 11 defense. Some of them put it in a separate
- 12 proceeding.
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: Some of them handled
- it through mens rea, did they not?
- MR. CROUSE: They have.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Does mens rea for
- murder or for any other criminal defense vary
- 18 from case to case? Is it not the same in every
- 19 case regardless of whether the person claims to
- 20 be mentally ill or not?
- 21 MR. CROUSE: The mens rea element
- 22 would be consistent in an attempt to commit a
- 23 crime, yes.
- 24 JUSTICE ALITO: So if the mens rea
- 25 element traditionally incorporated a requirement

- of moral capability -- of moral culpability,
- 2 that would apply across the board, would it not?
- 3 Not just to cases where the person says this is
- 4 -- I -- I had this lack of capacity due to
- 5 mental illness, but I have it due to political
- 6 brainwashing or religious fanaticism or any
- 7 other reason?
- 8 MR. CROUSE: That's correct, Justice
- 9 Alito.
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, is that -- was
- 11 was that the traditional understanding of mens
- 12 rea?
- MR. CROUSE: So I don't believe that
- 14 was consistent with the historical understanding
- of mens rea. And I think it's also inconsistent
- with general criminal principles in which we
- 17 don't look at the motive of the individual
- 18 committing the crime --
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: Would -- would you
- 20 agree that historically, if you go back and you
- 21 look at the cases, you see this operating in two
- 22 categories of cases. One is for insane people,
- 23 and one is for what were then called idiots,
- 24 right, people who lacked mental capacity?
- So, I mean, but -- but for those

- 1 people, it came up again and again that, yes,
- 2 you know, you lack the moral capacity to
- 3 understand what you're doing and, therefore, the
- 4 criminal system ought to operate differently on
- 5 you. Isn't -- isn't that right?
- 6 MR. CROUSE: So I would push back only
- 7 in -- in regard to whether or not it was a moral
- 8 capability. I think, historically, it's looked
- 9 at a cognitive capability as to whether we could
- 10 -- can take intent to commit a crime.
- 11 And I don't think that the moral
- 12 capacity came in until the M'Naghten era as
- 13 to -- we asked whether or not someone knew it
- 14 was right and wrong to commit a crime.
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: But it wasn't phrased
- 16 at that. I mean, it's quite deep, this
- 17 question. It's like ethics and Aristotle. The
- 18 wind blew my hand. You don't hold him -- well,
- 19 I'll save my depth for later.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Finish your
- 21 question.
- JUSTICE BREYER: I'm not sure I want
- 23 to.
- 24 (Laughter.)
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,

Τ	counsel.
2	MR. CROUSE: Thank you.
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Ms. Prelogar.
4	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ELIZABETH B. PRELOGAR
5	FOR THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
6	SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENT
7	MS. PRELOGAR: Mr. Chief Justice, and
8	may it please the Court:
9	Petitioner bears the burden of
10	establishing that substantive due process
11	principles override the Kansas legislature's
12	judgment in this case in adopting a mens rea
13	test of insanity, and he has not carried that
14	burden.
15	Petitioner suggests that this Court
16	should recognize a theory of moral culpability
17	and impose that uniformly across the states.
18	But the problem with that approach is, both as a
19	matter of history and in contemporaneous
20	practice, there has been no agreement on the
21	precise circumstances when mental illness should
22	excuse criminal responsibility.
23	And I'd like to begin, actually, with
24	the hypotheticals that Justice Sotomayor and
25	Justice Breyer brought up, because I think that

- 1 this actually illustrates that even in
- 2 contemporary jurisdictions today, there is a
- 3 basic divide on when someone should be entitled
- 4 to invoke the insanity defense. And this gets
- 5 to the -- the difference between legal wrong and
- 6 moral wrong.
- 7 Even in those jurisdictions that adopt
- 8 a wrongfulness test, the one that Petitioner is
- 9 proposing, there is differential treatment of
- 10 defendants based on whether they could
- 11 appreciate that their conduct violated the law
- 12 and constituted a crime or not.
- So imagine the defendant who hears
- 14 voices that command him to kill in order to save
- 15 the human race. He knows that murder is a crime
- and that he'd be violating the law, but he
- thinks the action is morally justified because
- 18 of his mental illness.
- 19 In a substantial number of
- 20 jurisdictions, he would not be entitled to
- 21 invoke the insanity defense. And so to try to
- 22 recognize or articulate a theory of moral
- 23 culpability, I think, has -- has no roots in
- 24 history and would actually raise the possibility
- of challenging state laws across the nation.

1	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Excuse me. We				
2	have every state has a duress defense. They				
3	all vary. They all have different exceptions.				
4	They all have different articulations. There's				
5	never been a common one, but all 50 have them.				
6	And the essence of it is defined very				
7	simply as duress, compulsion. And we give wide,				
8	wide, incredible latitude to the states to				
9	define those circumstances.				
LO	I think what your adversary is saying				
L1	is that making this go simply to intent and				
L2	taking out some differentiation from the true				
L3	lunatic who knows it's wrong to kill a person				
L4	but the TV made him do it, no volition				
L5	whatsoever to conform his conduct to the law, no				
L6	ability, I think it's more moral incapacity,				
L7	rather than capacity. The intent-based defenses				
L8	don't encompass that in any way.				
L9	This is not like Clark where we found				
20	that the two prongs of the M'Naghten test were				
21	really encompassed in the first. That's what				
22	the problem is for me. There is an essence,				
23	just as there is an essence of compulsion for				
24	duress as a defense mechanism, there is some				
25	minor amount that has to excuse criminal				

- 1 liability.
- MS. PRELOGAR: And, Justice Sotomayor,
- 3 Kansas here has recognized cognitive incapacity
- 4 as the way that you excuse criminal
- 5 responsibility when you are assessing these
- 6 difficult issues of how mental illness should
- 7 function to excuse criminal culpability in a
- 8 criminal justice system.
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's --
- 10 MS. PRELOGAR: I think that --
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- where we
- 12 differ.
- 13 MS. PRELOGAR: But to the extent that
- 14 what --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because you could
- 16 know something is against the law and still not
- 17 have the ability to conform your conduct. If I
- 18 make a moral choice I could say, if it's only a
- 19 moral choice, I could say I don't wish to do it
- 20 because of my morality. Could I physically stop
- 21 myself? Yes.
- 22 Someone who is insane can't even
- 23 physically stop themselves.
- MS. PRELOGAR: And our --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's a

1 different, sort of --2 MS. PRELOGAR: I absolutely agree it's a different test of insanity. As this Court has 3 recognized, jurisdictions have struggled with 4 5 this across time and across different places and 6 they've settled on different variants in trying to identify the precise circumstances --7 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: But, Ms. --9 MS. PRELOGAR: Which would pull 10 someone totally outside the realm of --11 JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Prelogar --12 MS. PRELOGAR: -- criminal 13 culpability. 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- what you are 15 suggesting as a test for insanity is not a test for insanity. It's just the usual intent 16 17 requirement that we apply to all defendants. 18 If the defendant doesn't have the 19 intent to kill, then the defendant is not 20 culpable for that act. And it has nothing to do 21 with his insanity or not. And I think that the 22 question Ms. -- Justice Sotomayor is asking is, 23 is there something else that's necessary? And we would leave a lot of flexibility to the 24

states, but that something else is -- is

- 1 something that relates particularly to insane
- defendants, to, you know, their ability to say,
- 3 because I have a mental illness, there has to be
- 4 something more.
- 5 MS. PRELOGAR: So I don't think that
- 6 there is something else here. And as this Court
- 7 has recognized, the guidepost is history. What
- 8 Petitioner needs to do is come forward with some
- 9 kind of historical consensus establishing that
- there's a fundamental principle that Kansas's
- 11 mens rea approach is violating.
- 12 And actually the mens rea approach is
- itself one that was linked to the common law
- 14 early articulations of insanity. It was long
- 15 understood that one of the ways you might try to
- identify that class of individuals who should be
- declared legally insane as a legal concept was
- to look at those who didn't have capacity to
- 19 form criminal intent.
- 20 And I -- I want to pause --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: But --
- MS. PRELOGAR: -- for a moment --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Prelogar, let's
- 24 just say I disagree with this, that when I look
- 25 back at the history I see lots of cases, Rex v.

- 1 Arnold, Billingham, a number of others, which
- 2 make it quite clear, I mean, these are all
- 3 people who had an intent to kill.
- 4 And what the common law was saying was
- 5 that even though they had the intent to kill,
- 6 there was going to be a further inquiry into how
- 7 their insanity limited their moral
- 8 understanding, that -- their understanding of
- 9 wrongfulness of their act. So if I think that
- 10 that's kind of all over the history, how do I
- 11 find for you?
- MS. PRELOGAR: Well, I want to make
- 13 clear that even if you thought this was a novel
- 14 approach that didn't have roots in history, the
- 15 Court has many times recognized that outlier
- states aren't necessarily violating substantive
- 17 due process.
- 18 Leland versus Oregon, for example, was
- 19 a case where Oregon was the only state in the
- 20 nation that required defendants to prove their
- insanity beyond a reasonable doubt. So I don't
- 22 think that that's cause alone to think that
- 23 somehow this is violating a fundamental
- 24 principle.
- 25 And I think, actually, looking at the

- 1 jury instructions in some of the cases that you
- 2 mentioned, Justice Kagan, like Rex versus
- 3 Arnold, the jury was instructed there that the
- 4 defendant had to be shown to have no
- 5 understanding or memory such that he could form
- 6 no intent whatsoever.
- 7 That is a restrictive test of
- 8 insanity. It's focused on this same idea of
- 9 cognitive incapacity --
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, it's -- it's
- less helpful to me to go over each case one by
- one than for you to tell me that if, you know,
- if I -- what I think is true is that the
- 14 history, there's -- there's -- there's just a
- 15 ton that suggests that -- that there was
- something more than a requirement that the
- 17 defendant have -- be able to form an intent to
- 18 kill.
- Does -- does Ms. Schrup then win?
- MS. PRELOGAR: I don't think so,
- 21 because Petitioner still bears the burden of
- 22 trying to articulate with precision what that
- 23 something more is. And I --
- JUSTICE BREYER: You can --
- MS. PRELOGAR: -- think for this here

- 1 --
- JUSTICE BREYER: You can, I mean, that
- 3 was the point of my question, I think. The law
- 4 has many, many ways of, in different
- 5 circumstances, trying to separate out
- 6 individuals for whom the criminal justice system
- 7 is just not going to work in terms of
- 8 preventing, et cetera, the crimes.
- 9 One, the wind blew my arm. Okay?
- 10 Two, duress, because in a duress case you're
- 11 looking to see could the -- could the defendant
- 12 have done otherwise.
- With insanity you're close to that.
- 14 Often it's a question of could the defendant
- 15 have done otherwise.
- 16 And even where not, it is is this
- individual so different from an ordinary
- individual that it just doesn't make sense to
- 19 apply the law?
- Now, if some something like that is
- 21 going on, then my question, if, in fact, he's
- the dog, out. Why isn't it? The dog told me to
- 23 do it.
- Now, that's the fourth time I have
- 25 asked that. But I would like to know what you

- 1 think about it.
- 2 MS. PRELOGAR: So these are obviously
- difficult questions, Justice Breyer. They're
- 4 ones that societies have wrestled with for
- 5 centuries in trying to balance the medical and
- 6 moral and legal judgments that go into crafting
- 7 an insanity rule.
- 8 This Court has long recognized that
- 9 states have principal responsibility to do that.
- 10 And I think that there are various ways states
- 11 could decide that they want to distinguish
- 12 between those two defendants.
- For one thing that cognitive
- 14 incapacity test which focuses on whether the
- 15 individual thinks that the person he shot was a
- dog, might be an easier inquiry for juries to
- 17 undertake. It might be a more
- 18 readily-observable sign of mental illness and
- 19 less likely to lead to confusion about what was
- 20 actually in the defendant's mind and whether he
- 21 was considering right versus wrong.
- 22 A jurisdiction might also think that
- 23 looking at considerations of individual
- culpability, they don't want an on/off switch
- 25 for criminal responsibility but, rather, want to

- 1 shift those considerations to the sentencing
- 2 stage where a judge can take evidence and make a
- 3 more nuanced determination of individual
- 4 culpability.
- 5 Ultimately --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How does that stay
- 7 --
- 8 MS. PRELOGAR: -- I think that these
- 9 --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- consistent with
- 11 Apprendi, assuming we find that since the
- 12 beginning of modern thought that there is an
- irreducible minimum of due process that requires
- 14 the insane to be not convicted by a judge or put
- in a mental institution by a judge but by a
- 16 jury?
- MS. PRELOGAR: May I answer, Mr. Chief
- 18 Justice?
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes.
- 20 MS. PRELOGAR: There would still be a
- 21 question, Justice Sotomayor, of how you define
- 22 who is the insane. That's a legal concept.
- 23 It's one that's yielded no single formulation.
- 24 And I think for this Court to try to articulate
- 25 a theory of moral culpability could throw into

- 1 question state laws across the nation that are
- 2 trying to make these difficult judgments.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 4 counsel.
- 5 Ms. Schrup, you have five minutes
- 6 remaining.
- 7 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF SARAH SCHRUP ON
- 8 BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- 9 MS. SCHRUP: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 10 Justice. I'd like to make three quick points:
- 11 First, the problem with the mens rea
- 12 approach, to get to Justice Breyer and
- 13 Sotomayor's point, is that it scrapes out the
- 14 why, the underlying motivation fueled by mental
- illness that explains a defendant's act. And
- 16 that has been a part of our history for
- 17 centuries.
- 18 And that gets to the dog or the dog
- 19 example. It's completely arbitrary. I don't
- 20 know why if you think -- why one defendant who
- 21 thinks that a dog, he's shooting a dog, versus
- another one who thinks a dog is ordering him to
- 23 shoot someone else, makes any difference
- 24 whatsoever. The first person is acquitted and
- 25 let out on the streets and the second is put in

- 1 jail and maybe put to death.
- 2 The second piece of this -- and so
- 3 there's no safety net, basically. What Kansas
- 4 does, actually, is even more extreme because it
- 5 limits the kind of mental illness evidence that
- 6 could come in, and it is essentially advocating
- 7 -- it -- it never explains why or whether there
- 8 is any light between the wild beast test and the
- 9 M'Naghten I test, but either way it is
- 10 fundamentally different than what we have had
- 11 historically and what 48 jurisdictions retain.
- 12 Second, I'd like to turn to my friend
- on the other side's notion that -- that there is
- 14 some limits. He actually doesn't suggest
- anything. And if you look at page 39 and 40 of
- their brief, basically everything is up for
- 17 grabs.
- There can be no mens rea. They can
- 19 make everything strict liability. Duress,
- 20 self-defense, all of these defenses are on the
- 21 line because, according to them, all that's
- 22 required in Kansas is a voluntary act and
- 23 intentionality.
- 24 And, finally, turning back to history,
- it's just not right to say that the right and

- 1 wrong principle is a 19th Century invention.
- 2 There is a wall of cases and authorities
- 3 starting in the 1500s and continuing,
- 4 uninterrupted, all the way through until 1843
- 5 when M'Naghten was formed.
- 6 There's literally scores of cases,
- 7 here and in England, applying the right and
- 8 wrong principle.
- 9 To contrast that with the test that
- they suggest, which is essentially the wild
- 11 beast test, that was invoked maybe two or three
- 12 times. It was a blip.
- So history favors us. And although
- 14 due process is a rigorous burden for a
- petitioner to meet, we satisfy it here because
- they have taken something out of our fundamental
- 17 criminal culpability, what we believe as a
- 18 country, they have scraped it out and they are
- 19 punishing the insane as a result.
- 20 If this Court has no further
- 21 questions, we would ask you to please --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, I would --
- MS. SCHRUP: -- reverse the case.
- 24 JUSTICE ALITO: -- ask you a question
- 25 if you -- if you've finished your -- your -- the

- 1 comments that you want to make.
- In your reply brief you say that the
- 3 state's premise is that insanity was
- 4 traditionally tied to a lack of mens rea. And
- 5 you say -- you agree with that, right?
- 6 MS. SCHRUP: It was tied to common law
- 7 intent, if we use the term mens rea, but it was
- 8 tied to common law intent, which is a very
- 9 different term than what they used, Justice
- 10 Alito.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, you -- I -- I'll
- 12 quote you: "The state's premise is that
- insanity was traditionally tied to a lack of
- mens rea, true, but mens rea historically
- required precisely the moral blame worthiness
- 16 that Kansas law now excludes." So that's your
- 17 historical position.
- 18 MS. SCHRUP: That's half of our --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: And how do you
- 20 reconcile that with the fact that mens rea does
- 21 not vary from crime to crime? So if that was
- the understanding of mens rea, that would apply
- in every case and there would have to be moral
- 24 blame worthiness in every case, not just those
- 25 where the -- the -- the lack of blame worthiness

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1
      is attributable to mental -- to a mental
 2
      disorder, however that is defined?
                MS. SCHRUP: If I'm understanding your
 3
      question, Justice Alito, yes, mens rea, but mens
 4
 5
      rea historically or common law intent always
 6
      contained this moral component, this --
7
                JUSTICE ALITO: Then it would --
 8
               MS. SCHRUP: -- intent to harm.
 9
                JUSTICE ALITO: -- apply across the
10
     board.
               MS. SCHRUP: It would, with the
11
12
      exception of --
                JUSTICE ALITO: It would apply --
13
14
               MS. SCHRUP: -- perhaps --
                JUSTICE ALITO: -- to the person who
15
      said I assassinated this political leader
16
     because he is an evil person --
17
18
               MS. SCHRUP: Oh.
19
                JUSTICE ALITO: -- and he is going to
20
     do evil things.
21
                MS. SCHRUP: No, Justice Alito,
22
     because the only people that were -- that this
     has traditionally been applied to are the insane
```

JUSTICE ALITO: And that's what you

and maybe infants and that's what --

23

24

- 1 are arguing for, a separate insanity defense,
- and that was M'Naghten. But that's inconsistent
- 3 with the historical record as you, yourself,
- 4 understand it, which is that it was tied to mens
- 5 rea, which is categorical, applies in every
- 6 single case. What -- what is wrong with that?
- 7 MS. SCHRUP: Our position is that to
- 8 the extent it was tied to mens rea, inherent in
- 9 the notion of mens rea was the ability to choose
- 10 between right and wrong.
- 11 So that is very different. That is
- very different than what Kansas has today, which
- 13 has no inquiry into that.
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, these 18th
- 15 Century cases that talk about moral capability
- or lack thereof in mens rea in the same breadth
- are hard to understand, but you have to take
- into account -- may I finish my sentence --
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Certainly.
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: -- Mr. Chief Justice?
- 21 (Laughter.)
- JUSTICE ALITO: That you have to take
- 23 into account that people -- that the 18th
- 24 Century and early 19th Century understanding of
- 25 how the human mind works was very different from

1	what we have today. There wasn't even any	
2	any such thing as psychiatry in 1791 and it was	
3	in its infancy in 1868. Is that wrong?	
4	MS. SCHRUP: Mr. Chief Justice?	
5	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You may.	
6	MS. SCHRUP: I want to answer this	
7	succinctly. It's not about what mental illness	
8	was or wasn't. It's about how we treated insane	
9	people, this narrow group of them. I think	
10	everybody knows who they are when they are	
11	forced to decide it. And it's about not	
12	punishing people who don't know right from	
13	wrong.	
14	Thank you.	
15	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,	
16	counsel. The case is submitted.	
17	(Whereupon, at 11:09 a.m., the case	
18	was submitted.)	
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

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